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V E N E Z U E L A

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MORALES PAUL ON BORDER INCIDENT WITH COLOMBIA

PA030355 Caracas Radio Rumbos Network in Spanish 2100 GMT 2 Jan 85

[By Luis Alfredo Gomez]

[Text] The Venezuelan Government has decided that the border incident resulting from the definitely unauthorized entry of Colombian military helicopters into Venezuelan territory is closed. Venezuelan Foreign Minister Isidro Morales Paul, in explaining Venezuela's position, said that the apologies conveyed by the Colombian Government were satisfactory.

[Begin recording] [Morales Paul] Indeed, this morning, the Colombian ambassador to Venezuela delivered a note conveying Colombia's apologies to the Venezuelan Government for the incident and explaining that this was an antinarcotics operation by the police in the Colombian northern zone, La Guajira Department, aimed at locating drug processing laboratories and clandestine airstrips. In fact, the operation was a success because a U.S.-registered plane and 368 marijuana packages weighing 9,600 kg and 1,043 kg of cocaine were confiscated.

The note apologized for the entry into Venezuelan territory. Since the Colombian Government sent its apologies, the Venezuelan Government considers the incident closed.

[Unidentified reporter] Does this satisfy the Venezuelan Government?

[Morales Paul] Yes, we consider the incident closed because the Colombian Government apologized.

[Reporter] Are there any assurances that this kind of incident will not happen again? You have stated that it was part of an operation to combat drug trafficking and that these operations will continue.

[Morales Paul] This is a normal incident between neighboring countries. We must not blow it out of proportion. The national government sent a protest note to Colombia and the note was received. We must learn from this experience that incidents of this kind can take place between neighboring countries.

[Reporter] Can the incident mark the beginning of a comprehensive or more thorough border agreement to combat drug trafficking?

[Morales Paul] I think so. We must look at the positive side of this incident. Perhaps we could reach an agreement at the police level, to allow police commands to communicate directly with each other so as to settle any questions or prevent any mistakes like this one from recurring. [end recording]

BRIEFS

PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE -- Venezuelan President Jaime Lusinchi issued Decree No 404 on 17 December 1984, creating the Presidential Committee To Reform the State [Comision Presidencial para la Reforma del Estado]. It will conduct research and make proposals to determine the guidelines, policies, and actions to be followed to establish a modern state that responds to the needs and requirements of Venezuelan society. The committee will act as an advisory body to the president of the Republic and channel its actions and recommendations through the Ministry of the Secretariat of the Presidency. [Summary] [Caracas EL UNIVERSAL in Spanish 19 Dec 84 p A 13 PA]